Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.

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PRESIDENTIAL MESSAGE

It will soon be 1988 and we look forward to two important Central American meetings - the first on Saturday February 13th in London in the Allenby Room at the Victory Services Club. This is being arranged by Dr Richard Saundry; we invite exhibits and look forward to a bumber attendance. The second will be arranged by Mike Birks in April at the Conservative Club, Urmston, Manchester. Full details will be in our next number and meantime interested members are asked to write to Mike Birks whose address is on our masthead.

Capex is over and our congratulations to our members who exhibited:-

Henry Madden	Guatemala, the Stampless Period	GOLD
Leo J Harris	Prestamp postal history of C.A.	VERMEIL with felicitations
Derek Pocock	British North Borneo	VERMEIL
Richard Washburn	19th Century Honduras	VERMEIL
Stanley Lindo	Nicaragua. the First Issue	VERMEIL
George McCarty	Nicaraguan Seebecks 1890-99	SILVER

This seems to be good going in view of the comments I have read on hard judging and on downgrading or some awards. Downgrading at Internationals can only give a negative result. I have suffered myself in the past and at times have resented the fact that there has been no comment from our National Judges who surely should have the interests of their exhibitors at heart and be able sympathetically to discuss any downgrading that has been made. I have been told that it is not their duty; in my opinion it should be.

A happy New Year to you all in 1988.

52 St Leonards Road
Newton Abbot
Devon TQ12 1JX

John Fosbery,
President, The Spanish Main

CONGRATULATIONS

to Kilian Nathan of Zurich,
who was awarded his THIRD Large Gold
at HAFNIA, in Copenhagen.

THE PROVISIONAL POSTAL STATIONERY OF NICARAGUA by D N KILNER

Continued from the previous issue

In this year (1907) in the Province of Zelaya, there was a lack of 5 centavos envelopes for the internal letter rate. (Rates were not increased in line with the rest of Nicaragua, since the silver currency was virtually inflation proof.) Two envelopes, namely the 1900 10 centavos red violet surcharged "Vale 5 centavos" in 1903 (H&G 52 and 52a, fig 18), or surcharged "Vale 5 cts." in 1905 (H&G 61, fig 19).

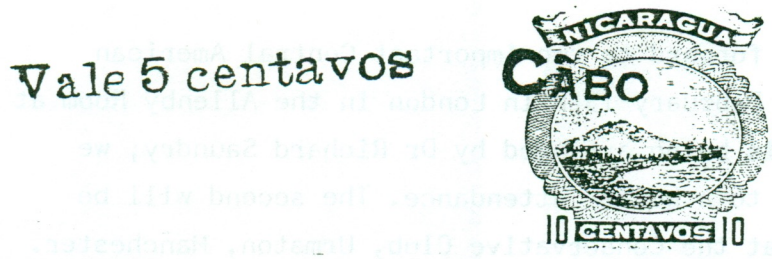


fig 18

fig 19

1908 In order to maintain postal supplies, further surcharges were needed.

Postal Cards The surcharge "VALE 4¢-1908/INTERIOR" in two lines (fig 20) was used to surcharge an unissued 5c card in the Coat of Arms design (H&G 66a), the 1906 5c green (H&G 63), and the 1906 5+5c reply card (H&G 64), which was separated to form two single cards.

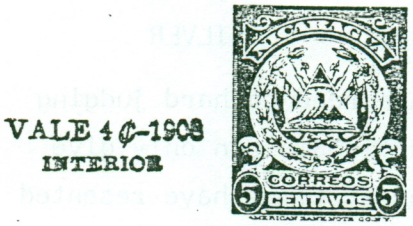


fig 20

fig 21

fig 22

Postal Envelopes The redrawn Waterlow and Sons Ltd., 10 centavos envelope (H&G 69), was again issued, but handstamped "1908" in violet (14mm x 3mm, fig 21). The 1905 5 centavos blue envelope with the Coat of Arms design (H&G 59), was surcharged "VALE 10¢-1908" in violet, in both single (27mm x 3mm) and double line (fig 22).

Official Postal Stationery Postal Envelopes No mention of official provisional postal stationery has been found until 1908, when two repprts in The Mainsheet (Vol 9, No 35), mentions three items. They are all large size legal envelopes. Two are 20 centavos envelopes, surcharged "CORREOS—1908/VALE 15c" (fig 23), and "CORREOS—1908" (fig 24) respectively. The third is a 15 centavos envelope of the same series, surcharged "CORREOS—1908/VALE 20c" (fig 25).

fig 23

fig 24

fig 25

The reason for these surcharges and overprint eludes me. Perhaps the shortage of stationery items was such that official stationery was brought in and used for ordinary post office use. However there apparently is no mention of these items in postal stationery catalogues, which leads me to think that perhaps they are manufactured items - by whom is open to speculation. Thoughts on this subject would be welcome!

1909 The 1889 10 centavos envelope (fig 1) surcharged "5/CENTAVOS/5", was authorised for use by a circular black handstamp inscribed "ADMON. DE CORREOS DEL CABO GRACIAS A DIOS" in the top half of the circle and "Republica de Nicaragua" in the bottom half. In between are the Arms of Nicaragua, surrounded by leaves (Diam. 44mm, fig 26). This envelope was authorised for use at the internal letter rate of 5 centavos. Two such envelopes with the date April 2nd, 1909, have been found used internally at Cabo Gracias à Dios. Whether this envelope was an official issue or just a postal official using up some of the old 1889 surcharged items that had been found is not known.

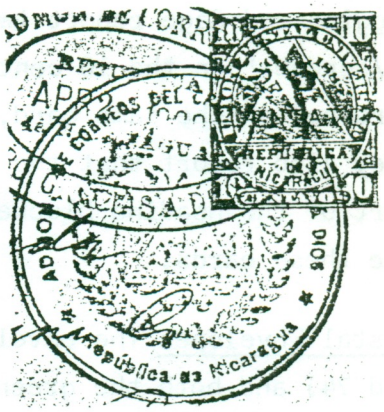


fig 26

From about 1909 to 1912 the spate of surcharging and handstamping seems to have ceased. In 1912 new cards and envelopes in a new Liberty design were issued together with stationery with a locomotive design. The locomotive design was for use in the coastal province of Zelaya.

For a while all looked well, but in 1913 a decision was made to combine the two currencies of the country - Zelaya's silver currency with the paper currency of the rest of the country - into the Gold Cordoba, and go onto the gold standard. This necessitated the stamps and postal stationery of 1912 being surcharged with the new currency.

1913 The scale of surcharging necessary in order to convert the stationery into the new currency was very extensive, involving the 4c, 10c and 10+10c Liberty cards (H&G 72, 73 and 75), and the 4c, 10c and 10+10c Locomotive cards (H&G 76, 77 and 79). Both types of reply cards were severed to provide single cards before sale.

Three types of surcharge were employed, "Vale/un centavo/de cordoba" (fig 27), "VALE/un centavo/de cordoba" (Fig 28) and "Un centavo/de/Cordoba" (fig 29).

fig 27

fig 28

fig 29

All three surcharges are found on the 4c and 10c Liberty cards, and figs 27 and 28 on the two halves of the 10+10c reply card. Fig 27 is found on the 4c and both halves of the 10+10c reply card with the Locomotive design. Fig 28 is found on the 10c Locomotive design.

Higgins and Gage report two further surcharges on the cards, namely "VALE/un/centavo/de/cordoba" on the 10 centavos brown Liberty design (H&G 73) and "Dos/centavo/de/cordoba" on the same card, but I have yet to see these surcharges on these cards. They also report that the halves of the reply card surcharged with fig 27, have part of the heading blocked out with a heavy black bar, but again I have yet to see these cards.

Postal Envelopes The envelopes involved were the 10c Liberty and Locomtive (H&G 72 and 74) and both the green and brown 35c "Valley of Leon" cards (H&G 73 and 75).

Five surcharges were employed: "VALE/dos/centavos/de/cordoba/1913" (fig 30), "Vale/2cts./de cordoba" (fig 31), "Vale/dos centavos/de cordoba" (fig 32), "Dos/centavos/de/Cordoba" (fig 33) and "VALE/dos/centavos/de/Cordoba" (fig 34).

fig 30

fig 31

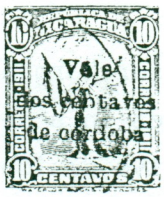


fig 32

fig 33

fig 34

The 10c Liberty envelope is known surcharged with figs 30, 32 (in both black and red), 33 (in both black and red) and 34, and the 35c green envelope with figs 31, 32 and 33. The 10c Locomotive envelope is known surcharged with fig 32 and 33, and the 35c brown envelope with fig 31.

The combination of fig 33 in red on the 10c Liberty card has apparently not been seen by collectors of Nicaragua, according to H&G, and a further surcharge "Vale/2 cts./de/cordoba" on the 35c green envelope has apparently yet to be seen

With the revaluing of the stationery in the new currency, this virtually ended the

1916 The 1912 35 centavos dark green envelope (H&G 73), was revalued to 2 centavos with a surcharge reading "VALE/ C$ 0.02" in black (14mm x 9mm, fig 34). This surcharge revalues old currency envelopes in the new currency, to meet a shortage of envelopes at the internal rate.

fig 35

This was the last surcharge recorded and presumably remained on sale until exhausted or replaced in 1921 with a new 2 centavos envelope depicting Leon Cathedral.

As stated at the beginning of this article, the foregoing has been at attempt to gather together information regarding the surcharge and overprint period in Nicaraguan postal stationery. Obviously, readers will have their own interpretations as to why these surcharges and overprints were made, and if any member would care to add his thoughts/observations, then please do so, via the editor. Information about previously unrecorded surcharges or combinations of surcharge on card or envelope would also be very welcome.

Acknowledgements

Higgins and Gage Postal Stationery Catalogue.
The Stamps of Nicaragua by Joseph B Leavey.
Stanley Gibbons Magazine.
The Postage Stamp Magazine.
The following for information and illustrations: John Whiteside, Kilian Nathan, Robson Lowe, Michael Birks, and lastly John Fosbery for suggesting the article in the first place.

DO YOU COLLECT BELIZE?

If you do, you may be interested to know of the existence of the Belize Philatelic Study Circle; a group devoted to Belize stamps and postal history. They publish a newsletter "The Belize Collector", and a sample issue is available for two U.S. dollars. Enquiries should be addressed to Peter Bylen, PO Box 411238, Chicago, IL 60641-1238 USA, who will be pleased to hear from you.

DO YOU COLLECT EL SALVADOR?

The Associated Collectors of El Salvador (A.C.E.S.) stamp collecting and philatelic study club is on a membership drive, and anxious to increase the membership rolls so that the club will have a bigger audience for their publication "El Faro", their expertising service and club auction. Membership applications and information are available from the Secretary/Treasurer, Jeff Brasor, 2 Howard Road, Chelmsford, Mass 01824, USA. They welcome any and all collectors - from the new collector to the veteran - interested in furthering their knowledge of the stamps of El Salvador.

COSTA RICA POSTAL STATIONERY

The article on Costa Rican postal stationery by Finn Stjernholck, which appeared in issue No 27, pages 68-74, has brought a response from Derek Palmer of Santiago. He writes "I am pretty sure that the item you mentioned was printed when Alvaro Bonilla-Lara was Minister of Finance of Costa Rica. He returned to Chile around 1949, so it would date from the late 1940's. The Asamblea Legislativa, the Library (Biblioteca) used a Tarjeta Postal for official use, size 162 x 90mm, on buff card, which bears a small printed portrait of Juan Mora Fernandez with the date 1825 below. These cards have an order number, 1992 - Imp. Nacional - 1970, on the reverse."

Derek enclosed a photocopy of the card, which we illustrate below.

We also illustrate (above) the airgraph owned by John Fosbery, mentioned in the footnote to the article. We would welcome details of date of issue, quantities etc.

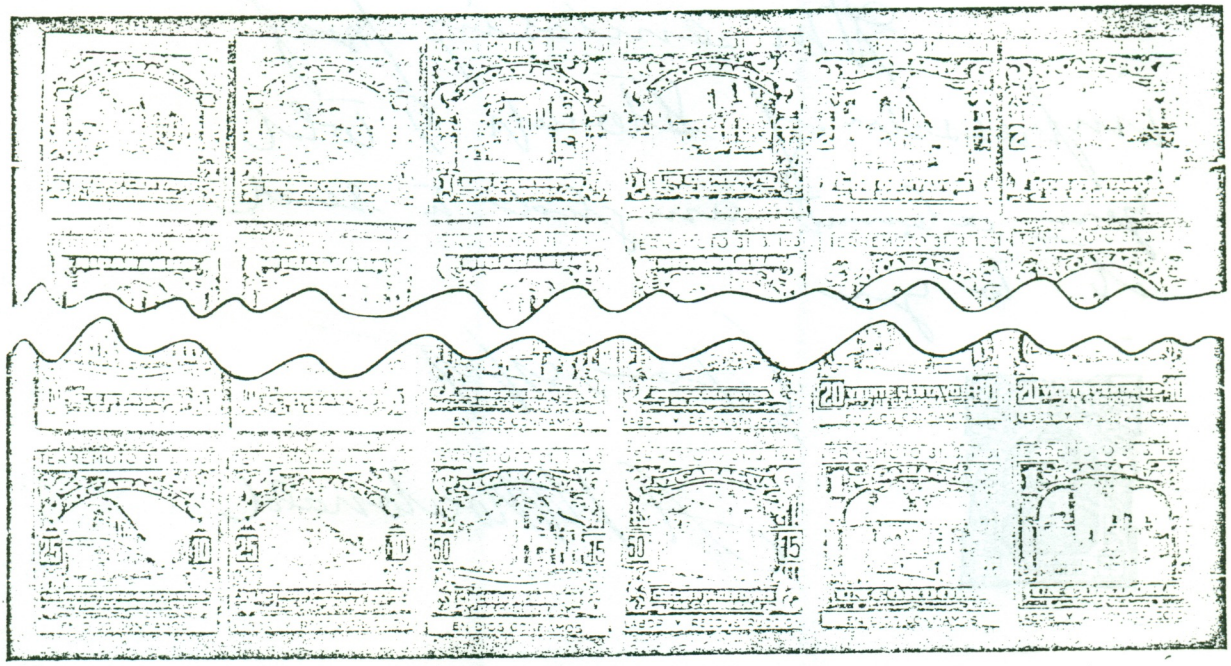
"REZAGADO"

In our last issue, Mark Spycher asked for the meaning of "Rezagado". Peter Cupper of Oviedo, Spain, writes to tell us that it means "left behind", or "held back" and adds that he supposes it an appropriate word to describe a dead letter.

NICARAGUA: THE EARTHQUAKE "ESSAYS"

Derek Pocock of Australia writes about the Earthquake labels we first mentioned in issue No 13, page 9. He writes "Enclosed is a photostat from a page of an unknown (American) magazine advertisement for the stamps. The origin would be of interest if anyone has a run and can recognise the type face. They surely must date from 1932. Maybe Managua did order the issue but couldn't pay the production costs so the printers merely offloaded them for what they could get."

This Remarkable Complete Commemorative Set



This illustration shows one of the most unique sets of stamps ever printed. Nicaragua on March 3rd 1931 was the scene of the most devastating eathquake Central America has ever known. Many lives were lost and practically all public buildings were reduced to ruins as pictured on these stamps, which show the different buildings both before and after the earthquake.

Originally this set, which consists of 24 different stamps in 12 different colors was ordered by the Nicaraguan Government for the purpose of raising funds to re-build the destroyed area, therefore each stamp has two different values, one intended for postage, the other for the earthquake fund. Two other sets were previously issued and sold only one single day, but did not raise the required amount.

However through unforseen circumstances this set was never used and thus became one of the most interesting commemorative sets available to the average collector, as otherwise it would have been entirely too high priced because the face value alone is $2.25 per set.

Without being catalogued this set enjoys tremendous popularity with collectors in all parts of the world due to its artistic beauty, its length, its unique before and after illustration, its high face value and above all on account of the small number of sets printed (only 5000) which will soon make it quite expensive and hard to get.

We will send you free the entire complete set, less the four stamps which are in your enclosed approval book on page 1, provided that you keep the entire approval selection for only $1.00 and provided you send this $1.00 within ten days from the day you receive same.

We make this extraordinary offer only in order to get acquainted with you and to get a chance to serve you further, as we know that you will appreciate the merit of our future selections and will be pleased with the promptness and fairness of our service.

THANK YOU!

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WHO WERE ELDRIDGE AND MACDONALD?

Richard Washburn writes, enclosing a copy of a note he has.

Mr Frank B Eldridge

Dear Sir

I'm enclosing proof impression of Stamp I told you about and am glad to send it to you

Yours truly

A N Macdonald

He says "Supposedly Mr Macdonald was the engraver who did the Bogran issue of 1891 (Honduras) and his friend Mr Frank Eldridge had asked him to send a copy of one of the stamps. The plate proof is the 25c in magenta (the issued color)."

Perhaps some member could provide, via the editor, some background on these two gentlemen?